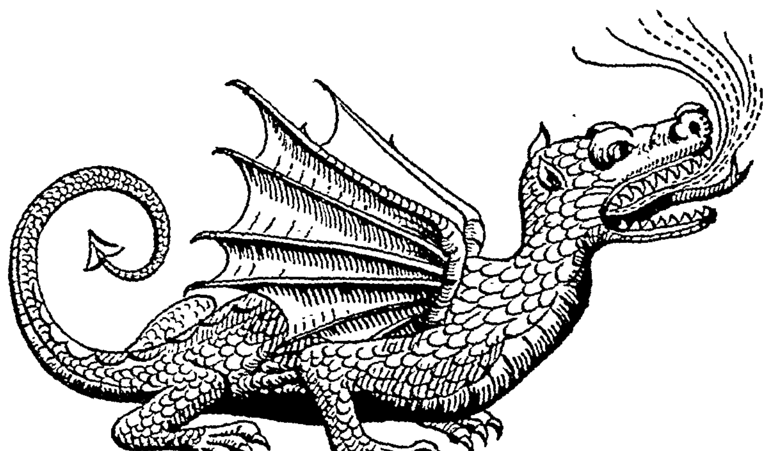
FAIRY TALES FROM GRIMM

Retold for very young readers



GOLDEN PLEASURE BOOKS
LONDON

TALES RETOLD FOR YOUNGER READERS





Rosebud

Once upon a time there lived a very sad king and queen. They were sad because they had no children of their own.

One day the unhappy queen walked by the river. 'Oh, how I wish I had a child of my own,' she sighed.

Suddenly a fish popped its head out of the water and whispered something to her. The queen was so surprised to hear a fish talk that she stooped to hear it say: 'Your wish shall come true. Soon you shall have a little daughter.'

And the fish was right. The queen soon had a baby girl and she called the baby Rosebud.

The king was so proud of his beautiful baby daughter that he wanted everyone to see her.

'I'll give a great feast,' he said. 'And I'll invite all my friends and relations and neighbours and . . .' He wondered who else he could invite to the feast. 'And the fairies in my kingdom,' he added at last. 'The fairies will be good and kind to my baby daughter.'

Now the king forgot that there were thirteen fairies, but that he had only twelve golden dishes for them to eat from at the feast.

'Oh, dear,' said the king. 'I shall only be able to invite twelve fairies after all.' So one poor fairy was not invited to the party.

After the great feast was over, the twelve fairies who were invited, peeped into the baby princess's cot and wished good things on the baby. One gave her beauty, another promised she would be rich, the next wished her to be sweet and kind and so on, until the princess had all the best things in life given to her by the fairies.

Before the last fairy had time to peep into the cot, the fairy who had not been invited suddenly burst into the room, shouting angrily: 'Now it's my turn to wish something on the baby.'

And, before anyone could stop her, the uninvited fairy said: 'I wish that, when the king's daughter is fifteen years old, she will prick herself on a spindle and die.'

The twelfth fairy stepped forward quickly and said, 'I have not had my turn yet. I cannot stop that cruel wish, but I can



The young prince said, 'I will go and see Rosebud.'

change it. I say that the princess shall not die, but shall sleep for a hundred years instead.'

The king was so worried about the angry fairy's dreadful wish that he ordered his men to buy all the spindles in the kingdom and to burn them.

Princess Rosebud grew up and the wishes of the fairies came true. She was beautiful, good and kind.

On the day of her fifteenth birthday, the king and queen w not at home and the princess was alone. She decided to exp the palace. It was so large that she had never been in al

rooms. After a time, she came to an old tower. She climbed the narrow stairs and found a little door at the top. She turned the golden key and the door swung open. There sat an old lady busy at a spinning wheel.

'Hello,' said Rosebud. 'What are you doing?'

'Spinning,' said the old lady.

'Please may I try?' asked the princess. She took the spindle and tried to spin. But she had never done it before. The spindle slipped and pricked her finger. She cried out and fell down and lay quite, quite still. She had fallen into a deep sleep.

Just at that very moment, the king and queen had come home. They fell fast asleep too. Everything else in the palace came to a standstill. The horses fell asleep in the stables. The dogs slept in the yard, the pigeons slept on the roof, and even the flies on the walls fell asleep.

Everything stopped what it was doing. The meat roasting in the oven stopped spluttering, the fire stopped blazing; the cook who was in the middle of scolding the kitchen boy for being lazy, stopped spanking him, and they both fell asleep!

Everything in the palace stayed like that for a hundred years. Each year the hedges and brambles round the palace grew thicker and thicker so that, after many years, even the roof and chimneys were hidden.

From time to time, people tried to cut their way through the jungle of undergrowth, because they had heard stories that a beautiful princess slept in a palace somewhere in the

jungle, but the thorns and brambles were too thick for them.

King's sons tried bravely to fight their way through to the sleeping princess, but they could never find the palace. Many never returned.

At last more than ninety-nine years passed and an old man told a king's son the strange story of the sleeping princess.

'I will cut my way through,' said the prince, bravely.

'No,' said the old man. 'Please don't try! Many princes have tried before you and they have not returned.'

But the prince was not afraid and, on the very day that the hundred years were over, he set out.

The strange thing was that the prince did not find brambles as the others had done. Instead of thorns, he found flowering bushes and, as he pushed his way through them, they closed behind him.

At last he came to the palace and saw a strange sight. There in the courtyard were the dogs and horses and pigeons, all sleeping just as they had fallen asleep a hundred years before. The flies on the walls still slept, the cook was still in the middle of shaking the kitchen boy, but they were both like statues, fast asleep!

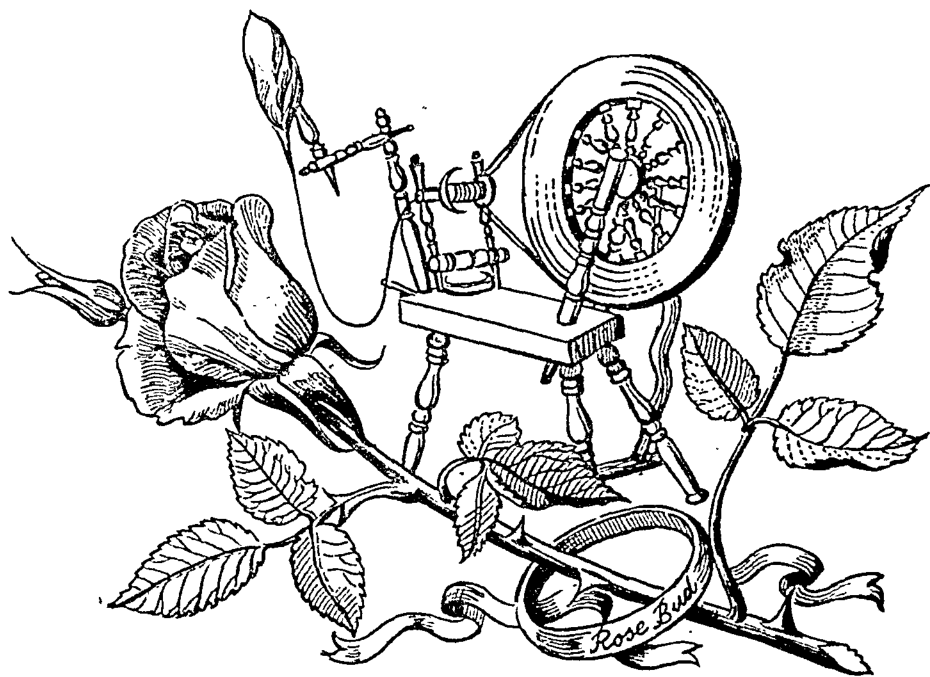
The prince went into the palace from silent room to silent room, until he came to the old tower. He opened the door and there — in the middle of the little room at the top of the stairs, lay Princess Rosebud fast asleep. She looked so beautiful that the prince just had to bend down and give her a kiss. Immediately

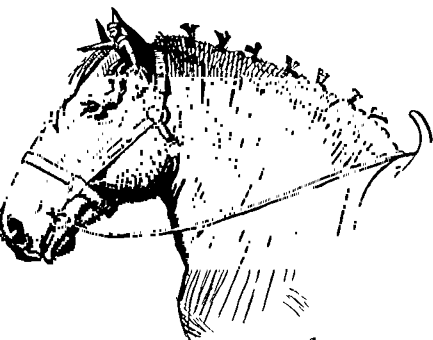
she opened her eyes and smiled up at him. The whole palace awoke. Suddenly everywhere was full of happy noises. The horses shook themselves, the dogs leapt up and barked with joy. The pigeons fluffed out their feathers and flew off into the fields. The flies on the walls buzzed away and the fire in the kitchen crackled and blazed merrily.

The roast meat spluttered and spat in the oven, and the cook finished scolding the kitchen boy!

The king and queen awoke too. They were happy to see their daughter Rosebud so happy and well. The Prince asked them if he could marry the princess, and they said that of course he could!

Soon a great wedding was arranged and Princess Rosebud lived happily ever after with her Prince.





Tom Thumb

Once there was a poor woodman and his wife They sat by the fire every evening all by themselves.

'How lonely it is,' said the woodman. 'I wish we had children of our own playing about. Other people look so happy with their children.'

'Yes,' sighed the wife, as she sat at her spinning wheel. 'I would be so happy if I had a child. I wouldn't mind how small it was. Even if it was only as big as my thumb, I would still love it very much.'

The wife's wish came true. Some time later she had a little boy who was strong and healthy, but not much bigger than her thumb.

The woodman and his wife said: 'Well, at last we have what we wished. And we will always love him, even if he is so tiny. Let us call him Tom Thumb.'

They fed the boy well but he never grew at all. He was bright and clever, and his eyes sparkled with fun.

One day, as the woodman was getting ready to go into the forest to cut wood, he said: 'I wish I had someone to follow me with the cart. I am in such a hurry today.'

'I'll do it for you, father,' said Tom Thumb. 'I will make sure the cart is in the wood by the time you need it.'

The woodman laughed. 'Why, you can't even reach the horse's bridle!' he said.

'Never mind,' said Tom. 'If mother harnesses the horse, I can climb up into the horse's ear and tell him which way to go.'

'Well, let's try it just this once,' said his father.

Tom's mother harnessed the horse and popped Tom into the horse's ear. There sat Tom, telling the horse which way to go. 'Stop!' he cried, and the horse did as Tom told it.

So the horse went on, just as if the woodman were driving him into the wood. Later the horse was going just a little too fast and Tom cried out: 'Gently! Gently!'

Two strangers were passing by and heard him.

'What an extraordinary thing,' said one. 'Look at that cart going along all by itself! I can hear the driver talking to the horse, but I can't see him at all.'

'Yes, that is strange,' said the other. 'Let's see where it is going.'

y followed the cart into the wood to the place where the man was working.

ello, father!' cried Tom Thumb. 'Here I am with the cart, afe and sound. Will you lift me down, please?'

he woodman lifted the little boy down from the horse's ear l put him on a straw where Tom sat as happy as can be. The o strangers watched this, quite amazed. At last one said to the her: 'You know, we could earn a lot of money if we had that ttle fellow. We could carry him from town to town and make people pay to see him. Let's see if we can buy him.'

The men went to the woodman and asked if they could buy the little boy. 'He will be much better off with us than with you,' they said.

'But he is my own son!' exclaimed the woodman. 'I wouldn't sell him for all the riches in the world.'

Tom heard what was being said and had an idea. He climbed up his father's coat and on to his shoulder. Then he whispered into the woodman's ear, 'Let them buy me, father. I will soon come back to you.'

So the woodman did as Tom suggested and sold him to the strangers for a large piece of gold. As they set off with Tom, one of the men said: 'Where do you like to sit?'

'Oh, put me in the rim of your hat,' said Tom. 'I can wall round and see the country as we are going along.'

So they did as Tom asked and they journeyed on until evenir time. Then Tom said: 'Please may I get down, I'm very tirec

They lifted Tom down and placed him on a lump of earth in a ploughed field near the road. Tom ran about amongst the furrows and popped into an old mousehole.

'Good night,' he cried out. 'I'm off. Next time, take more care of me.' The two men ran quickly to the mousehole but, although they poked about with their sticks for a long time, they could not find Tom, for he had run right down into the hole.

When it became quite dark, the men gave up trying to find him and went on their way, very cross with themselves. After the men had gone, Tom tried walking in the ploughed field, but he was so small and the clods of earth were so big that he found it very hard going. At last he found an empty snail shell. He crept into it for a good night's sleep.

Just as he was falling asleep, he heard two men passing by. One was saying, 'How can we get that rich parson's gold and silver?'

Tom called out: 'I know how you can get it.'

'What was that?' cried one of the men. 'I'm sure I heard someone speak.'

They both stood listening and Tom called out again. 'Take me with you and I'll show you how to get the parson's money.'

'But where are you?' asked the men.

'Look down on the ground and listen for my voice,' said Tom. When the bad men found Tom and lifted him up on their hands, they said: 'You funny little fellow. Whatever makes you think you can help us?'



'This is lucky,' said he, 'I can sleep ve

'Well,' said Tom. 'I can get between the iron bars of the windows in the parson's house and throw out whatever you want.'

'That's an idea,' said the bad men. 'Come on, then, and let's see what you can do.'

At the parson's house Tom slipped through the window bars into the room. Then he called out as loudly as he could: 'Wha do you want from here?'

The two men were alarmed and whispered 'Don't speak loudly or you will wake everyone up.'

Tom pretended not to hear them and shouted again 'H uch do you want? Shall I throw it all out?'

The cook who was sleeping in the next room heard the noise and sat up in bed to listen.

The bad men ran off a little way, very frightened. But at last they returned thinking Tom was only joking with them.

'Now, stop your jokes,' they whispered. 'And throw us out the money.'

Tom shouted as loudly as possible, 'All right. Hold your hands out, here it comes!'

The cook heard this quite clearly. She jumped out of bed and ran to open the door. The bad men ran off. The cook groped about but found nothing. While she went to fetch a light, Tom slipped out into the barn. The cook searched every nook and cranny, but at last went to bed thinking she must have been dreaming.

Tom Thumb crawled about in the hayloft and curled up in the hay for a good night's sleep. He decided to try and find his way home the next day.

But a sad thing happened. The cook got up early before daylight to feed the cows. She went to the hayloft and took a great bundle of hay, but Tom was in it fast asleep. The little boy did not wake up until he was in the cow's mouth!

'Good gracious me!' cried Tom. 'How on earth did I fall into the mill?' But he soon found out that he was not in the mill but in the mouth of a cow! He had to watch out for the cow's teeth in case she should bite him. At last the cow swallowed him!

It was very dark in the cow's tummy. 'They forgot to cut any

lows in this room,' said Tom. 'I wish I had a candle.'

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The cook was in the middle of milking the cow when she heard the voice. She could not see anyone and she felt sure it was the same voice as she had heard in the night. She was so frightened that she fell off the stool and upset the milk bucket.

Off she ran to the parson and said: 'Sir, the cow is talking!'

'What nonsense!' said the parson, and he went to the cowshed to see what was really the matter. As he stood in the doorway, he heard Tom shouting: 'Don't bring me any more hay!'

The parson was just as frightened as the cook. He was sure the cow was bewitched. 'We must have it killed,' he said.

Tom did his best to escape, but just as he thought he was free, a hungry wolf came and swallowed him up. Poor Tom, he wondered how he was going to get out this time.

As the wolf ran along, Tom started talking to it. 'My friend,' he said. 'If you are so hungry, I know where you can have a fine feast.'

'Where?' asked the greedy wolf.

Tom explained to the wolf how to get to his father's cotta 'You can crawl through a drain and get into the kitchen,' said. 'There you will find ham, beef, cakes and all sorts of o good things to eat.'

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The woodman killed the wolf

The greedy wolf did not wait to be told a second time. Off he trotted to the cottage and crawled through the drain into the kitchen of Tom's house. He gobbled up all the food he could find, but he ate so much that he was too fat to crawl out of the drain again.

That was what Tom had expected. So he started shouting and shouting.

'Be quiet,' said the wolf. 'You will wake everyone up.

'That's what I want to do,' said Tom. 'You've had your bit

n; now it's my turn.' And he went on shouting and singing. Tom's mother and father awoke and peeped through a crack the door. When they saw a wolf in their kitchen, they were very fraid. The woodman ran for his axe and killed the wolf. Tom alled out again: 'Father, it's me; it's me.'

'Good gracious, it's our son back again,' said the father. 'We were so afraid something dreadful might have happened to you.'

'I've had a lot of adventures,' said Tom. 'But it's good to get some fresh air at last.'

'Why, where have you been?' they asked.

'I've been in a mousehole, a snail shell, a cow's tummy and inside the wolf too. But I'm safe now.'

'Well,' they said. 'We will never sell you again for all the gold in the world.'

So they hugged and kissed him and gave him new clothes, because the others were quite spoilt after all that had happened o him.



The Queen Bee

Once two sons of a king set out into the world to seek their fortunes. They left behind them a younger brother who was a dwarf.

The two brothers wasted all their money on foolish things and did not dare to go home again.

The youngest brother at home decided to go and find his two brothers. When he found them, they laughed at him. 'Fancy him setting out into the world all alone like that!' they said. 'We are much wiser than him, but we didn't manage to get on very well.'

However, all three brothers set off again. They came to an ant-hill. The two big brothers wanted to disturb it because they

ght it would be fun to see the poor frightened ants scuttle carrying their eggs.

he little dwarf brother said: 'Leave the poor things alone. on't let you hurt them.'

Later they came to a lake with ducks swimming on it. The der brothers wanted to catch the ducks and roast them.

But the dwarf said: 'Let the poor things enjoy themselves. I von't let you kill them.'

Soon they came to a bees' nest in a hollow tree. Honey ran down the tree trunk. The big brothers wanted to drive the bees out by lighting a fire at the bottom of the tree, so that they could get the honey.

The dwarf stopped them by saying: 'Leave the poor bees alone. I won't let you burn them.'

They next came to a castle. As they passed the stables, they saw some lovely horses standing there. But the horses were made of marble. There was nobody about so the brothers went into the castle from room to room. They came to a door with three locks. In the middle of the door was a small peep-hole so that they could peep into the next room.

Inside they could see a little grey old man sitting at a table. They called to him twice but he did not hear them. But th third time they called, he did hear and came out to them.

He did not speak at all. He took hold of them and led them a beautiful table full of good things to eat. When they had ea he took them each to a bedroom.

The next morning, he came to the eldest brother and took him to a marble table. On the table were three stones with writing on them which said that the castle was under a spell, and telling them how it could be brought back to life again.

It said: *In the wood, under the moss, lie a thousand pearls belonging to the king's daughter. They must all be found. If one pearl is still missing by sunset, whoever is looking for them shall be turned into marble.*

The eldest brother looked for the pearls all day but by evening time he had not found even a hundred pearls. So he was turned into marble.

The next day the second brother tried to find the pearls. He only managed to find a hundred more, so he was turned into marble too.

The third day it was the dwarf's turn. He looked in the moss but it was so hard to find the pearls, and the job was so tiring, that he sat down on a stone and cried. As he sat there, the king of the ants which he had saved a few days before, came to help him. He brought five thousand ants to help the dwarf and it was not long before they had found all the pearls and laid them in a heap.

The second tablet of stone on the table said: *The key of the princesses' bedroom must be fished up out of the lake.*

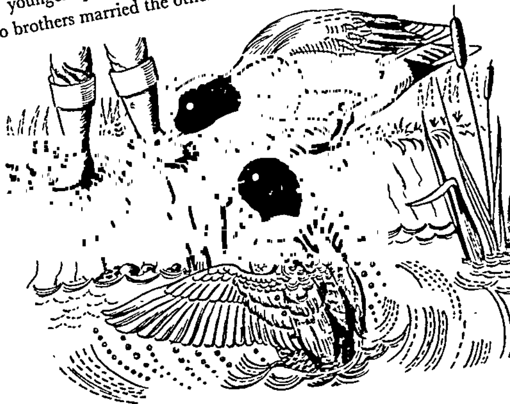
As the dwarf came to the edge of the lake, he saw the two ducks whose lives he had saved. They dived down and soon brought the key up from the bottom of the lake.

The third job which the dwarf had to do was the hardest of all.

d to choose which was the youngest and best of the king's ters. They were all so beautiful and looked exactly alike. e was told that the eldest had eaten a lump of sugar, the d had eaten golden syrup and the youngest had eaten a nful of honey. His job was to guess which one of them had . en the honey.

The Queen of the bees which had been saved by the dwarf me to his aid. She flew to the lips of all three girls but at last e sat on the lips of the one who had eaten honey. Immediately he dwarf guessed which was the youngest daughter.

So the spell on the castle was broken and everyone who had been turned into marble came to life again. The dwarf married the youngest princess and became king many years later. His two brothers married the other two princesses.





Snowdrop

It was the middle of the winter and big snowflakes were falling. A queen sat sewing at her window. The window frame was made of black ebony wood.

As the queen looked out of the window, she pricked her finger and three drops of blood fell into the snow. She looked at the bright red against the sparkling whiteness and said: 'I wish that my daughter would be as white as the snow, as red as the blood and black as the ebony of the window frame.'

the queen's little girl grew up, her skin was as white as
, her cheeks were as rosy as blood and her hair was as black
bony wood. And she was called Snowdrop.
ut Snowdrop's mother died and the king married another
e. The second queen was very beautiful but she was very
oud of her beauty. She could not bear to think that anyone else
ight be more beautiful than herself. She had a magic looking
lass, and she spent a lot of time gazing into it at herself, and
saying:

'Tell me, glass, tell me true,
Of all the ladies in the land
Who is the fairest? Tell me, who?'

And the glass answered:

'Thou, queen, art fairest in the land.'

But Snowdrop grew more and more beautiful. When she was seven years old, she was lovelier than the second queen. So, one day when the queen asked the looking glass who was the mos beautiful lady in the land, the mirror answered quite differentl from usual. It said:

'Thou, queen, may fair and beauteous be,
But Snowdrop is lovelier far than thee!'

The queen had never heard the mirror say this before. It n

her extremely angry. She called one of her servants and said: 'Take Snowdrop out into the wild woods so that I never see her again.'

The servant had to do as he was told but, when Snowdrop cried and asked him not to hurt her, he felt sorry for her. 'I will not hurt you,' he said, but he left her alone in the woods with the wild animals.

Poor little Snowdrop walked through the woods, lonely and afraid. The wild beasts roared and roamed about her, but not one of them hurt her.

In the evening she came to a little cottage and she went inside to rest. The cottage was neat and tidy. On the table was a clean white cloth laid with seven little plates, seven little loaves of bread and seven little glasses with wine in them. There were seven little knives and seven little forks, and in the corner of the room stood seven little beds.

Snowdrop was hungry. She nibbled a very little from each loaf, sipped a very little wine from each glass, and then decided to lie down and rest. She tried all the beds in turn. One was too long, one was too short, one was too hard, and one was too soft. But, at last, the seventh bed was just right, so she lay down and went to sleep.

Later the owners of the little cottage came in. They were seven little dwarfs who went out all day to dig for gold. They lit their seven little lamps and immediately saw that the place was not quite as they had left it.

The first dwarf said: 'Who has been sitting on my stool?'
The second said: 'Who has been eating off my plate?'
The third said: 'Who has been nibbling my bread?'
The fourth said: 'Who has been touching my spoon?'
The fifth said: 'Who has been picking up my fork?'
The sixth said: 'Who has been cutting with my knife?'
The seventh said: 'Who has been drinking from my glass?'

Then the first dwarf looked round and said: 'Who has been lying on my bed?'

The others quickly ran to their beds and cried: 'Someone has been lying on my bed!'

But the seventh dwarf found Snowdrop on his bed and called the others to come and look at her. They held their lamps up high and looked at her.

'How lovely she is!' they said.

They were very excited at seeing a beautiful little girl but they would not wake her. The seventh dwarf had to spend the nigh sleeping a short while in all the other beds until morning.

In the morning Snowdrop told the dwarfs what had happen to her. They were sorry for her and said: 'If you will keep t cottage tidy and cook and wash and look after us, you may s and we will take care of you.'

So the dwarfs went off to work, digging for gold in mountains. 'But be careful,' they warned Snowdrop. 'The c will soon find out where you are, so if anyone comes to the don't let them in.'

The queen was so pleased to think that she had got rid of Snowdrop that she went to the mirror to ask who was the most beautiful lady in the land now. She did not expect the answer the mirror gave her. It said:

'Thou, queen, art fairest in all *this* land;
But over the hills, in greenwood shade,
Where the seven dwarfs their dwelling have made,
There Snowdrop is hiding her head and she
Is lovelier far, o queen, than thee!'

The queen knew that the mirror always spoke the truth. She was angrier than ever because she knew that her servant had not done his job properly.

She could not bear to think of anyone being more beautiful than herself. She dressed up as an old pedlar woman and went over the hills to the dwarfs' cottage.

She knocked at the door and called out: 'Fine things for sale!' Snowdrop looked out of the window and said: 'Good morning, good lady. What have you to sell?'

'Lovely things, lovely things,' said the queen. 'Laces and ribbons in all colours.'

'She seems to be a very nice old lady,' thought Snowdrop. 'I'll let her in.' Snowdrop ran downstairs and unlocked the door.

'Good gracious me,' said the old lady. 'How badly you have laced your bodice across the front! Let me lace it up with one of my nice new laces!'

nowdrop did not guess that the old lady meant to do her any
m. So she stood in front of the pedlar woman and let her put
w laces in her bodice. The queen pulled the laces so tightly that
owdrop could not breathe, and she fell to the floor.

'That's the end of your beauty,' said the cruel queen, and she
urned from the door and went home.

In the evening, the dwarfs came home and found little Snowdrop still lying on the floor. Quickly they lifted her up and laid her on a bed. They soon found out what was the matter and cut the laces. At last Snowdrop felt better and opened her eyes.

The dwarfs said: 'The old woman you opened the door to was the queen herself. Be more careful next time. Don't open the door to anyone while we are out.'

When the queen returned home she went straight to her mirror because she was so sure it would tell her she was the most beautiful lady in the land.

But the mirror still said:

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There Snowdrop is hiding her head, and she
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The queen was very angry to think that Snowdrop was alive and more beautiful than herself. She dressed up again,

time she made herself look quite different from before, and she took with her a poisoned comb.

When she reached the dwarfs' house, she knocked on the door and called out: 'Fine things for sale!' But Snowdrop said: 'I can't let anyone in.'

The queen said: 'Just look at my beautiful combs,' and she gave Snowdrop the poisoned one. The comb looked so pretty that Snowdrop took it and started to comb her hair. But the moment she touched her hair with it, she fell to the floor.

'There you shall stay,' said the queen and went away.

That day the dwarfs came home early and found Snowdrop on the floor. They soon found the comb in her hair and, as soon as they took it out, Snowdrop sat up. She told them all that had happened, and they warned her again not to open the door to anyone at all.

The queen returned home and went straight to her mirror but the mirror told her once again that Snowdrop was more beautiful than herself. The queen said: 'Snowdrop shall die.' And she went to her room and poisoned an apple. The outside of the apple looked rosy and good to eat, but inside was poisoned.

The queen dressed herself up as a poor woman and travelled to the dwarfs' cottage once again. When Snowdrop heard the knock at the door, she put her head out of the window and said: 'The dwarfs have warned me not to let anyone in.'

'Never mind,' said the old woman. 'But do taste this delicious apple. I'll give it to you.'



They bewailed her three whole days.

'No,' said Snowdrop. 'I mustn't take it.'

'What a silly girl you are,' said the queen. 'What are you afraid of? Do you think it is poisoned? I tell you what, I'll eat half of it, and you may have the other half.'

The queen had been careful to poison only one half of the apple and, when Snowdrop saw her eating it, she thought it must be quite all right to eat the other half.

But Snowdrop had hardly put the apple in her mouth before she fell to the floor.

'This time nothing will save you,' said the queen. And she went straight home to the mirror. This time the mirror said:

'Thou, queen, art fairest of all fair.'

At last the queen was happy. Snowdrop was no longer fairer than herself!

When evening came, the dwarfs come home and found poor little Snowdrop lying on the floor. She did not seem to be breathing at all. They picked her up and laid her on a table and washed her face with wine and water.

For three whole days they watched over her, crying with unhappiness. She was so beautiful and her cheeks were still so rosy that they decided to make a glass box to rest her in so that they might still see her beautiful face. They wrote her name in gold letters on the glass box and said that she was a king's daughter.

They put the glass box on the hill and the dwarfs took turns to sit by it and watch. The birds also came and wept over the glass box; first came an owl, then a raven and last of all a dove.

And so Snowdrop lay for a long, long time in a deep sleep. Her skin was as white as snow, her lips were still as red as blood and her hair as black as ebony.

At last a prince came riding by and called at the dwarfs' cottage. He saw Snowdrop and read the writing on the glass box. He asked the dwarfs if he could take her away but the dwarfs said: 'We will not let her go for all the gold in the world.'

But the Prince asked again and again and the dwarfs felt sorry for him and said he could take her home after all.

As the prince lifted the glass box, the apple jerked out of Snowdrop's mouth and fell from her lips. Snowdrop immediately awoke! She sat up and said: 'Where am I?'

The Prince answered: 'You are safe with me.' Then he told her what had happened to her. 'I love you better than the whole world,' he said. 'Come with me to my father's palace and you shall be my wife.'

Snowdrop went home with the prince and a great and marvellous wedding was arranged.

The unkind queen was invited to the wedding feast. As the old queen dressed herself in fine clothes, she asked the mirror:

'Tell me, glass, tell me true,
Of all the ladies in the land,
Who is fairest? Tell me, who?'

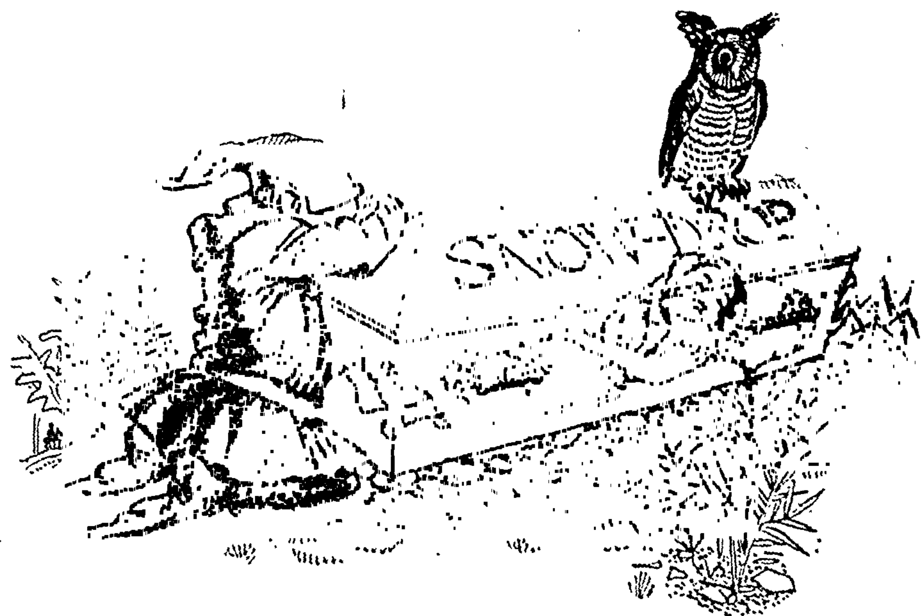
And the mirror answered:

'Thou, lady, art loveliest, *here*, I mean,
But lovelier far is the new-made queen.'

The queen could not believe that someone else was more beautiful than herself, now that Snowdrop had gone. But she was filled with curiosity to see what the new-made queen looked like, so she set off for the wedding. When she arrived and saw

that the new-made queen was Snowdrop, she flew into such a temper that she made herself quite ill and died.

But Snowdrop and the Prince lived happily for many years, ruling over that land.





Hansel and Gretel

Hansel one day took his little sister by the hand and said: 'I wish our mother were still with us. Since she died, we have been so unhappy. Our new stepmother does not love us and is often unkind to us. She gives meat to the dog, but we only get crusts of bread to eat. I'm sure our mother would be very sad if she knew how badly we are looked after! I know what, let us run away together and find somewhere else to live!'

So Hansel and Gretel left home and walked all day over the fields. At evening time they came to a great wood. They were both so tired and hungry that they fell asleep in a hollow tree

When they awoke in the morning, the sun was high above the trees and kept them warm. Hansel said: 'I am so thirsty, Gretel. If we could find a little stream, I would drink from it, and give you some water too. Listen, I think I can hear the sound of running water now.'

Hansel stood up and took Gretel by the hand. They went to look for the stream. Now their stepmother was a bad fairy and she had followed them into the wood to get them into trouble.

The children found the stream running over sparkling pebbles. Hansel wanted to drink from it but Gretel thought she could hear the stream saying: 'Whoever drinks from here will be turned into a tiger.' Gretel said: 'Hansel, please don't drink, whatever you do. I know you will be turned into a wild animal and then you will hurt me.'

Hansel was terribly thirsty but he listened to his sister and said: 'All right, I will wait until we find another stream.'

But, when they came to the next stream, Gretel listened again and she thought she heard the water sing: 'Whoever drinks from here will be turned into a wolf.'

'Please don't drink, Hansel,' she cried. 'Or you will be turned into a wolf and eat me up.'

So Hansel did not drink the water, but he said: 'I will wait until we find another stream, but then I will have to have a drink. I am so terribly thirsty.'

At the third stream, Gretel listened again and heard it say: 'Whoever drinks here will be turned into a fawn.'

'Please don't drink from here, Hansel,' she said. 'Or you will be turned into a fawn, and then you will run away from me.'

But Hansel was too thirsty to listen to Gretel any more. He had stooped down and started to drink. The moment his lips touched the water, he turned into a fawn.

Poor Gretel cried and cried over the little animal and big tears ran down the fawn's nose too, as it lay down beside her.

Gretel hugged the animal and said: 'Lie down quietly, little fawn. I will never, never leave you.' And she took off her golden necklace and put it round the fawn's neck. She picked some long rushes and plaited them into a lead on which she led the fawn through the woods.

At last they came to a little hut. Gretel peeped in the windows and saw that it was quite empty.

'We can stay here,' she said to herself. She gathered moss and leaves to make a soft bed for the fawn, and every morning she went out to pick berries and nuts and young grass for the fawn's meals. The fawn ate out of her hand and played happily with her.

When evening came, Gretel lay down beside the fawn and rested her head on its side and they both went to sleep. If only Hansel had still been a little boy instead of a fawn, they would have enjoyed living in the hut!

They lived like this for a long time in the woods, all by themselves. One day the king of that land decided to hold a great hunting party. When the fawn heard the sound of the horn echoing in the woods, and heard the baying of the hounds and

the call of the huntsmen, he wanted to go out and see what was happening.

'Please, Gretel, let me go out into the woods,' he said. 'I can't stay here any longer.'

Gretel did not want to let him go but, at last, she said: 'All right, but make sure you come back in the evening. If you tap on the door and say: 'Gretel, let me in,' I shall know it is you. But if you don't speak, I shall not unlock the door.'

Away frisked the fawn, enjoying the open air. The king and huntsmen saw the beautiful animal and followed it, but the fawn sprang over the bushes and disappeared from their sight.

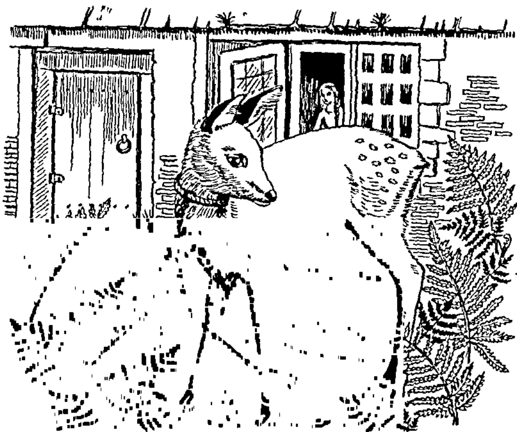
At evening time, as it grew dark, the fawn ran home to the hut. He tapped on the door and said: 'Gretel, let me in.' Gretel opened the door and the fawn trotted in and went to sleep on its soft bed.

The next morning, the fawn heard the huntsmen again and said: 'I must go out again, please let me go.'

Gretel let him go but reminded him to come home in the evening and to tap on the door just as before.

When the king and his huntsmen saw the fawn with its golden collar again, they chased after it. But the fawn was too quic for them. All day they chased it, until at last the huntsmen rounded it. One of them hurt it in the foot with his arrow s fawn had to limp all the way home.

The huntsman who had hit the fawn followed it and self in the bushes. He heard the fawn say: 'Sister, sist



As it grew dark he came running home to the hut, and tapped and said, 'Sister, sister, let me in.'

in.' The huntsman watched the door open and marked the place. He went back and told the king all about it. The king said: 'Tomorrow we will hunt the fawn again.'

Gretel was very frightened when she saw the fawn's bad foot. She washed it and looked after the animal. 'In the morning you will be better,' she said.

In the morning the fawn's foot was quite well again and when the horn blew, the little animal said: 'I must go and watc I will take great care not to let them catch me.'

But Gretel said: 'This time I will not let you go. I am sure you will never come back.'

'Oh dear,' said the fawn. 'When I heard the sound of the hunting horn, I felt as if I could fly. I shall pine away if you make me stay.'

Gretel had to let him go. As she opened the door, the little fawn leapt out gaily into the wood.

The king saw the fawn and said to his men: 'Chase it all day but do not hurt it.'

But by evening, no one had caught the little fawn. So the king called the huntsmen who had followed and seen the hut, and said: 'Show me the little hut you found the other day.'

Then he went and knocked on the door of the hut and said: 'Sister, sister, let me in.'

Gretel opened the door and the king went in. He thought she was the loveliest girl he had ever seen. Gretel was frightened when she saw that it was a king with a golden crown and not her little fawn.

He spoke kindly to her and said: 'Will you come to my castle and be my wife?'

'Yes,' said Gretel. 'But my fawn must come with me. We must always live together.'

'Of course he may come too,' said the king. 'And he shall have everything he needs all his life.'

Just at that moment, the fawn came home. Gretel tied the string round its neck and they left the woods.

The king took Gretel to his palace and they had a fine wedding. Gretel told the king all about Hansel being turned into a fawn. The king sent for the bad fairy and punished her. And immediately the fawn changed back into Hansel again. And Hansel lived in the king's palace with his sister for always.





Rumpel-stilts-kin

Once there lived a poor miller who had a very beautiful daughter. She was clever too and the miller was so proud of her that he was always boasting about her cleverness.

One day he told the king that his daughter could spin straw into gold. The king was greedy and fond of money. When he heard this, he ordered the miller's daughter to be brought before him.

He took her to a large room full of straw. He gave her a spinning wheel and said: 'If you do not spin all this straw into gold before the morning, you shall die.'

The poor girl tried to explain that she could not do it but the king would not listen to her. He locked her in the room and there she stayed all alone. She sat down in a corner and cried. Suddenly the door opened and a strange little man hobbled in. 'Good evening,' he said. 'What are you crying for?'

'Oh dear,' cried the girl. 'I've got to spin all this straw into gold and I don't know how to do it.'

'What will you give me if I do it for you?' asked the little man.

'My necklace,' said the girl. So the little man sat at the spinning wheel and quickly spun all the straw into gold.

When the king saw this, he was amazed and very pleased. But he became more greedy than ever. He shut the miller's daughter up again to do a more difficult thing. Once more the girl started crying until the little man came.

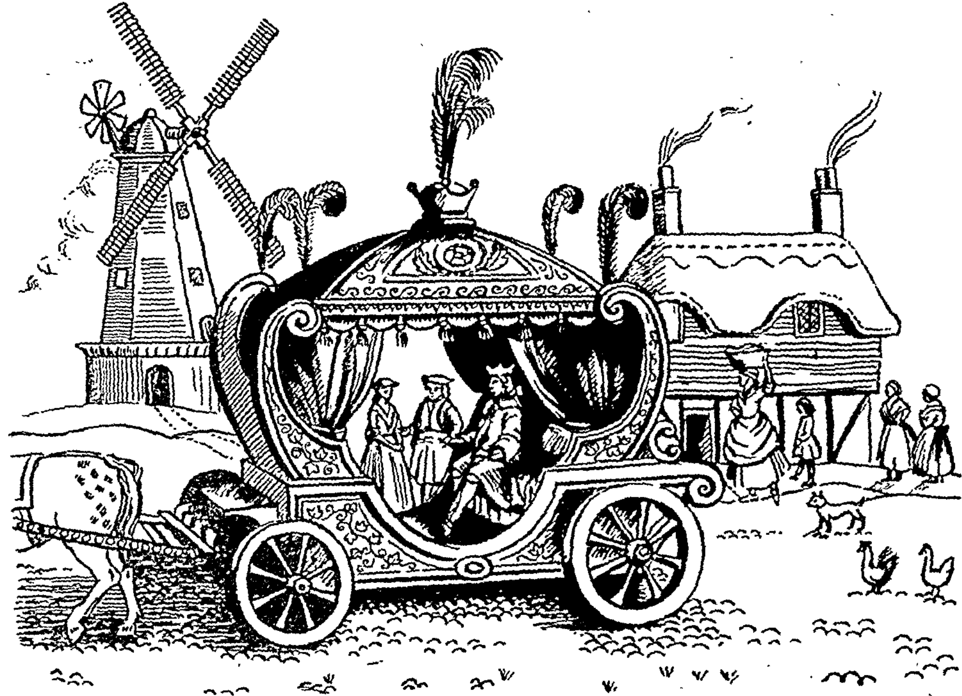
'What will you give me if I do the work for you?' he asked.

'The ring on my finger,' said the girl. So the little man took the ring and once again sat at the spinning wheel. By morning the work was finished.

The king rubbed his hands with glee when he saw the glittering treasure, but he became greedier than ever.

He shut the miller's daughter into a larger room than before and said: 'All this must be spun into gold tonight. If you do it all, you shall be my queen.'

As soon as the girl was alone, the dwarf came in as before and said: 'What will you give me if I spin this gold for you a third time?'



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'I have nothing left to give you,' said the girl sadly.

'Then will you promise to give me your first child when you are queen?' he asked.

'I may never be queen,' thought the girl. But as she did not know how to get the work done any other way she promised. The little man once more spun the heap of gold.

The king came in the morning and found the gold and married the miller's daughter as he had promised, and she became queen.

When the queen's first little baby was born, she was very happy and quite forgot the promise she had made to the little man.

One day he came into her bedroom and reminded her about the promise. The queen was so upset and wished she had never made the promise.

'I will let you have all the treasure in the kingdom instead,' she said.

But the man would not listen to her. At last the queen cried so much that the man said: 'I tell you what; if you can tell me what my name is before the end of three days, you shall keep your child.'

The queen lay awake all night thinking of every name she possibly could. And she sent messengers all over the land to find out new names which she had not heard before.

The next day when the little man came, she said: 'Timothy, Benjamin, Jeremiah . . .' and all the names she could remember, but the little man kept saying: 'That's not my name.'

The second day the queen tried all the funny names she could

think of such as 'Bandy-legs, Hunchback, Crookshanks . . .' but the little man still kept saying: 'That's not my name.'

The third day one of the messengers came back and said: I have not heard of any new names. But yesterday, as I was climbing the high hill by the forest, I saw a little hut amongst the trees. In front of the hut was a fire and a funny little man danced round the fire on one leg. And this was the song he was singing:

'Merrily the feast I'll make,
Today I'll brew, tomorrow bake;
Merrily I'll dance and sing
For next day will a stranger bring.
Little does my lady dream
Rumpel-stilts-kin is my name!'

When the queen heard this, she jumped for joy. Later, when the little man came and asked her what his name was, she said: 'Is it John?'

'No,' replied the little man.

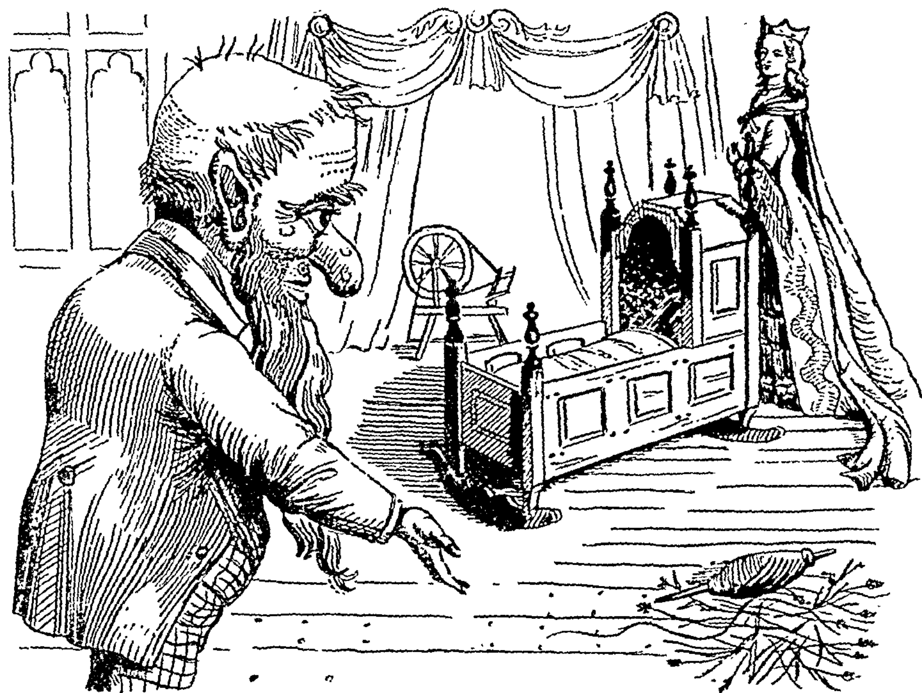
'Is it Tom?'

'No,' said the man.

'Can it be Rumpel-stilts-kin, then?'

The little man suddenly became very angry. 'Some witch has told you! Some witch has told you!' he shouted. He flew into such a temper that he stamped his foot right through the floor boards! He had to tug and tug with both hands to pull it out

again. After that, he went off as quickly as he could, while everyone laughed at him for all the trouble he had gone to for nothing.





Ashputtel

There once was a little girl who was kind and gentle to everyone. But she was very sad for she had lost her mother and missed her very much.

Not long after, the little girl's father married another wife. This new wife already had two daughters of her own, and they all came to live together. The two daughters were very pretty but they were not at all kind. They were especially unkind to the poor little girl.

They said, 'What is this girl doing in the sitting room? If she is going to eat our food, she must earn it first. She shall be our kitchen maid.'

They took away her fine clothes and gave her an old grey frock to wear. Then, laughing at her dirty clothes, they turned her into the kitchen.

There the little girl had to do all the hard work. She had to get up early in the morning before daylight to bring the water, to make the fire, to cook and do all the washing. Besides that, the sisters teased and laughed at her, and made her terribly unhappy.

In the evening, when she was tired, the little girl had no bed to lie on. She had to lie down close by the fire amongst the ashes to keep warm. This made her dusty and dirty, so the others called her Ashputtel.

One day the father, who was a rich man, was going to the fair. He asked his wife and dauthters what they would like him to bring back from the fair.

'Bring me back some fine clothes,' said the first.

'Pearls and diamonds for me,' cried the second.

The rich father then turned to his own little daughter and said: 'Now, child, what would you like me to bring home for you?'

The little girl looked up at her father and said quietly.

'Please bring me the first sprig of a bush or tree that rubs against your hat on your way home.'

The rich father bought fine clothes and pearls and diamonds for the elder girls as they had asked. Then on his way home, as he rode through the green copse, a sprig of hazel brushed against him and almost pushed his hat off.

So he broke it off and brought it back. When he reached home he gave it to the little girl.

Ashputtel took the sprig of hazel and planted it in the churchyard. She cried so much that she watered it with her tears. She visited the hazel three times every day until the twig grew into a tall, fine tree.

Soon a bird visited the tree and built its nest in it. The bird talked with the girl and took care of her and brought her whatever she wished.

Now the king of the land decided to hold a great feast. It was going to last for three days. He had a son and he told him to choose a wife for himself from all the guests who came to the feast.

Ashputtel's sisters were invited to the feast. They were in a great state of excitment and ordered little Ashputtel about, here, there and everywhere.

'Comb my hair,' said one.

'Brush my shoes,' said the other.

'Tie our sashes and get our clothes ready, for we are going to dance at the king's feast,' they cried.

As Ashputtel hurried to and fro getting her sisters ready, she could not help crying. She did so want to go to the dance too! At last she begged her mother to let her go.

'You, Ashputtel!' cried her stepmother. 'Why, you've nothing to wear, and you can't even dance. Fancy you asking to go to the king's ball!'

Little Ashputtel went on begging her mother to let her go. So, for peace and quiet, the stepmother said: 'I will throw this bowlful of peas into that heap of ash. If you can pick every single one of them out in two hours, you shall go to the feast.'

She threw the peas into the ashes, but Ashputtel ran out into the garden and cried out:

'Hither, hither, through the sky,
Turtle-doves and linnets fly!
Blackbird, thrush and chaffinch gay,
Hither, hither, haste away!
One and all, come help me quick,
Hasten, hasten — pick, pick, pick!'

Immediately two white doves came flying into the kitchen window, next came two turtle-doves, and after them came all the birds of the sky. They came fluttering and chirping and flew down into the ashes.

The doves bent down and started work. Pick . . . pick . . . pick . . . then all the other birds went pick . . . pick . . . pick . . . and picked all the peas out of the ashes and popped them into a bowl.

In an hour's time all the peas had been picked out of the ashes, and the birds flew out of the window again. Ashputtel carried the bowl to her stepmother. She was so pleased to think that now she would be able to go to the feast.

But the stepmother did not keep her promise. She cried out:

'Of course you can't go without any clothes to wear, and you can't dance either.'

Ashputtel cried and cried until the stepmother said: 'If you can pick two bowls of peas out of the ashes in one hour's time, then I'll let you go.'

She was so sure Ashputtel would never manage it, so she threw two bowls full of peas into the ashes.

Little Ashputtel went out into the back garden just as she had done before. She called out:

'Hither, hither, through the sky,
Turtle-doves and linnets fly!
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First the two white doves flew into the window, then followed the two turtle-doves, and all the birds of the sky came chirping and hopping about in the kitchen. They flew down into the ashes and set to work to pick the peas, pick . . . pick . . . pick . . . leaving the ashes behind.

Before an hour was over, they had finished their work and flew out of the window again. Ashputtel took the two bowls of peas to her stepmother, pleased to think that at last she would be allowed to go to the ball.

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But the stepmother did not keep her promise again. She said:

'You have no clothes and do not know how to dance. You would make us feel ashamed of you.'

And off she went to the feast with her two daughters.

When the house was empty, Ashputtel went and sat under her little hazel tree and cried. Then she said:

'Shake, shake, hazel tree,
Gold and silver over me.'

Immediately her friends the birds flew out of the tree and brought a gold and silver dress for her, and slippers of spangled silk. She put them on and followed her sisters to the ball.

They did not know who she was because she looked like some rich princess in her fine clothes. They certainly did not think it might be Ashputtel, as they knew they had left her behind in the ashes.

The king's son soon came up to Ashputtel and took her by the hand and danced with her. He would not dance with anyone else the whole evening. Whenever anyone else came and asked Ashputtel to dance with them, the prince said: 'This lady is dancing with me.'

So they danced until it was very late. At last Ashputtel said that she wanted to go home. The king's son said: 'Let me take you home,' for he wanted to find out where this beautiful girl lived.

'But Ashputtel slipped out when he was not looking and ran off



Her friend the bird flew out of the tree and brought a gold and silver dress for her

home. The prince followed her, but she jumped into the pigeon house and shut the door.

The prince waited outside until Ashputtel's father came home.

'The beautiful lady who danced with me this evening has hidden herself in your pigeon house,' he said to him.

They broke open the door, but found no one inside for Ashputtel had run out of the back of the pigeon house. She had gone to her hazel tree, slipped off her fine clothes and left them under the tree for the birds to carry away.

Then, in her grey frock, she lay down in the ashes, as she always did.

The next day, when the feast was held again, and every one had gone from the house, Ashputtel went to the hazel tree and called again:

'Shake, shake, hazel tree,
Gold and silver over me.'

Her friends the birds came and brought her a more beautiful dress than the one she had worn the day before. The king's son was waiting for her when she arrived at the ball. He took her by the hand and danced with her all the evening. Everyone thought what a beautiful girl she was, but if they tried to dance with her, the prince said: 'This lady is dancing with me.'

When it was time to go home, the prince followed her as he had done before, because he wanted to know where she lived. But Ashputtel skipped away behind her father's house. She could not find anywhere to hide, so she jumped up into the pear tree.

The prince was not quite sure where she had gone, but he waited until her father came home and said: 'The unknown lady who danced with me tonight, has disappeared again. I thought I saw her jump up into this tree.'

The father thought for a moment and said to himself: 'I wonder if it could be Ashputtel?'

He fetched an axe and they cut down the tree but found no one

in it. Ashputtel had slipped down the other side of the tree, taken her clothes back to the hazel tree and quickly returned to the kitchen.

The third day of the feast, after Ashputtel's father and mother and sisters had gone, she went into the garden and called again:

'Shake, shake, hazel tree,
Gold and silver over me.'

This time her kind friends the birds brought her a finer dress than the first two and her slippers were all made of gold.

People did not know what to say because she was so very beautiful. Once again the prince danced all the evening with her. He would not let anyone else ask her to dance, for he said: 'This lady is my partner.'

When Ashputtel wanted to go home, the prince said to himself; 'I won't lose her this time!'

But the beautiful lady slipped away from him so quickly that he did not see which way she went. But, in her hurry, she lost her golden slipper on the stairs, and could not go back for it.

The prince found the shoe and took it to the king.

'Father,' he said. 'I want to marry the lady who's foot exactly fits this golden slipper.'

Ashputtel's sisters were excited when they heard this for they both had beautiful feet, and felt sure that the golden slipper would fit them.

The eldest went first into the room to try on the slipper and her mother stood and watched. But the shoe was much too small for her. Her big toe would not go in.

'Never mind,' said the mother. 'Here is a knife, cut off your toe. When you are queen, you won't need it for you will not walk anywhere.'

So the silly girl cut off her big toe and squeezed the shoe on and showed it to the prince. He thought he had found the right person to be his wife and took her away on his horse.

On their way to the palace, they passed Ashputtel's hazel tree. A little dove sat on a branch singing:

'Back again, back again, look at the shoe!
The shoe is too small, not made for you.
Prince, prince, look again at thy bride,
For she's not the true one that sits at your side.'

The prince heard the song, jumped down from his horse and looked at the girl's foot. He saw what she had done and knew he had been tricked. So he turned his horse back and took the girl back to her home.

'This is not the lady to be my wife,' he said. 'Let the other sister try on the slipper.'

The second sister tried on the shoe, but her heel would not squeeze into it. Her mother pushed and squeezed the heel in, until she made it bleed.

When the prince saw the girl with the slipper on, he took her on his horse and started to ride to the palace. But, as they passed the hazel tree, the little dove still sat there singing the same song:

'Back again, back again, look at the shoe.
The shoe is too small, not made for you.
Prince, prince, look again for thy bride,
For she's not the true one that sits by thy side.'

The prince jumped from his horse and looked at the girl's foot. He saw her white stocking was red with blood from her sore heel and he knew she was not the right person to be his wife. He turned his horse and carried her home just as he had done before.

'This is not the right girl to be my wife,' he said to her father. 'Haven't you any other daughters?'

'No,' said the father. 'There is only dirty little Ashputtel. She is the child of my first wife. She could not be your wife.'

'No, of course not,' said the stepmother. 'She is much too dirty. I can't possibly let you see her.'

But the Prince said: 'I must see her.'

So Ashputtel washed her face and hands and went in to see the prince. She curtsied to him and he gave her the golden slipper to try on.

She took the heavy old shoe off her left foot and put on the golden slipper. It fitted perfectly! Just as if it had been made specially for her! The prince came closer and looked at her face.

'Yes,' he said. 'This is the right girl to be my wife.'

The stepmother and daughters were furious when the prince took Ashputtel on his horse and rode away with her.

When they reached the hazel tree, the little dove sang:

> 'Home, home, Look at the shoe!
> Princess, the shoe was made for you.
> Prince, prince, take home thy bride,
> For she is the true one that sits by thy side.'

The dove finished its song and flew on to Ashputtel's shoulder and went home with her to the prince's palace.





The four clever brothers

Once a poor man said to his sons, 'Boys, I have nothing to give you. You must all go out into the world and earn your own living. Begin by learning a job and see how well you can get on in the world.

So the four brothers carried their sticks and little bundles over their shoulders and, after saying goodbye to their father, went out of the gate together.

Presently they came to crossroads, each road leading to a different country. The eldest boy said, 'This is where we must part, and go our separate ways. In four years from now, let's

come back to this spot and see how we have all got on in the world.'

Each brother took a different road. As the eldest one hurried along his road, he met a man who asked him where he was going.

'I'm going to try my luck in the world,' said the boy. 'I want to start by learning a trade.'

'Why not come with me?' asked the man. 'I will teach you to become the cleverest thief in the whole world.'

'Oh, no,' said the boy. 'That would not be honest. I should only end up in prison.'

'You need not fear that,' said the man, 'because I will teach you how to steal things that no one else can get or cares about, and where no one would ever find you out.' The young man followed the man and became a very clever thief.

The second brother also met a man who asked him the same question.

'I don't know what job I want to learn yet,' said the boy.

'Why not come with me and learn to be a stargazer?' suggested the man. 'Once you understand the stars, you will understand everything.'

The boy thought it was a good idea and he soon became a clever stargazer. When he finished learning and was ready to leave his master, the man gave him a telescope and said: 'With this telescope you can see all that is happening in the sky and on the earth and nothing will be hidden from you.'

The third brother met a huntsman who took him and taught

him so well that he became a very clever huntsman. When he was ready to leave his master, the huntsman gave him a bow and said: 'You will never miss, if you shoot with this bow.'

The youngest brother met a man, just as his other brothers had done.

'What would you like to be?' asked the man. 'Would you like to be a tailor?'

'Oh, no,' said the youngest brother. 'I should not like to spend all my life sitting cross-legged, stitching to and fro from morning till night.'

'Oh, I didn't mean that kind of tailoring,' said the man. 'You will learn something more interesting than that.'

So the youngest boy went with the tailor and learned the job from the beginning. When he left his master, the tailor gave him a needle and said: 'With this needle you can sew anything. Even if it is as soft as an egg or as hard as steel, the seam will be so fine, it will never show.'

At the end of four years, the four brothers met at the crossroads. After saying hello to each other, they set off to their old home and told their father all that had happened to them, and all about the jobs they had learned.

One day, as the family were sitting in front of the house under a very high tree, the father said: 'Now, I would like to see what each of you can do in your job.'

He turned to his second son and said: 'At the top of this tree there is a chaffinch's nest. Tell me how many eggs there are in it.'

The stargazer took his telescope, looked up and said: 'Five.'

'Now,' said the father to the eldest son. 'See if you can take the eggs away from under the mother bird, without her knowing anything about it.'

The cunning thief climbed the tree and stole the five eggs from under the bird without her feeling anything!

The father took the eggs and put one on each corner of the table and the fifth egg in the very middle.

He said to his huntsman son, 'Split all the eggs in half with one shot of your bow and arrow.'

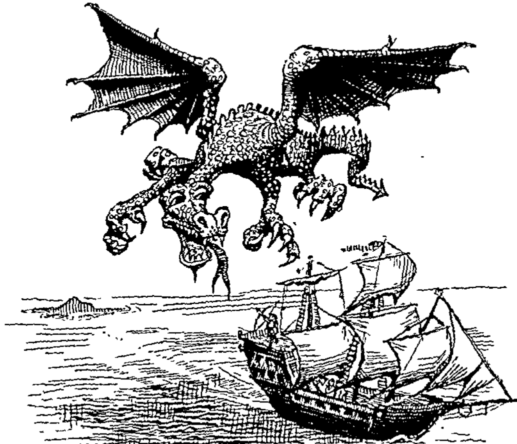
The huntsman son took his bow and hit all five eggs with one shot, just as his father had asked.

'Now comes your turn,' said the father, turning to his youngest son, the tailor.

'I want you to sew up the eggs, with the young birds in them, so neatly that the huntsman's bow will not have hurt them at all.'

The young tailor took his needle and sewed up the eggs again. When he had finished, the father sent the thief up the tree again to put the eggs under the bird on the nest. The mother bird went on sitting on the eggs and, in a few days, young birds hatched out. They had nothing wrong with them, only a little red streak on their necks where the tailor had sewn them together.

'Well done, boys,' said the father. 'You all seem to have done very well and learnt something worth knowing. It is very difficult for me to decide who should get the prize. Perhaps one day,



The huntsman took up his bow and shot him straight at the heart

the time will come when you can each use your jobs for a useful purpose.'

Not long after this, there was trouble in the land. The king's daughter had been carried off by a great dragon. The king was so upset that he promised that whoever brought her back would be allowed to marry her.

'Here is a chance for us!' said the four brothers. 'Let's see what we can do about it.'

'I will soon find out where the princess is,' said the stargazer

as he looked through his telescope. 'There she is, sitting on a rock in the sea, and I can see the dragon standing guard over her.'

He went to the king and asked for a ship so that he and his brothers could find the princess. They sailed away until they came to the right place. They found the princess on the rock in the sea, just as the stargazer had said. The dragon was fast asleep with his head on her lap.

'I dare not try to shoot him,' said the huntsman brother, 'in case I kill the beautiful princess as well.'

'Then I will see what I can do,' said the brother who was a thief. He stole the princess so quickly and quietly from under the dragon's nose, that the dragon did not stir, but went on snoring without knowing what had happened.

Then away they went in their boat back to the big ship, as fast as they could row. The princess was so happy, but soon the dragon awoke. When he saw the princess had gone, he came roaring through the air after them. As he flew over the boat, and was just about to pounce on them to carry off the princess again, the huntsman took his bow and shot him. The dragon fell into the sea, but he was such a huge animal, that his great body upset the boat. Everyone was tipped out of the boat, which was broken to pieces, and had to swim on a few planks.

The tailor quickly took out his needle and stitched the planks together. Then he sat on the raft he had made and gathered up the pieces of boat and soon stitched them together again. At last they reached the ship and sailed home safely.

When they brought the princess home to her father, there was great excitement. The king said to the four brothers: 'Only one of you can marry my daughter. You must decide between yourselves which of you it is going to be.'

How the brothers quarrelled! The stargazer said: 'If I hadn't found the princess with my telescope, none of you would have been able to do anything to save her.'

'What was the use of your seeing her, if I had not taken her away from the dragon,' said the thief. 'She should be my wife.'

'No, I should marry her,' said the huntsman brother. 'If I hadn't killed the dragon, he would have killed all of us, as well as the princess.'

'And if I hadn't sewn the boat together again,' said the tailor brother. 'You would all have been drowned. So I think the princess should be mine.'

The king listened to the quarrel and said: 'You are all right. As you can't all marry the princess, then none of you shall have her. Instead, I will give you each a reward for your clever deeds. You shall each have half a kingdom.'

The brothers were very pleased with this idea, and decided it was much better than quarrelling over the princess. So they each had half a kingdom and lived happily for always, taking care of their father.

The Golden Goose

Once there was a man who had three sons. The youngest was called Dummling, but the rest of the family were not always very kind to Dummling.

One day the eldest son decided to go into the forest to cut wood. His mother gave him a delicious meat pie and a bottle of wine to take with him. As he went into the wood, he met a little old man who said he was hungry and thirsty.

'Please may I have a little of your food and some wine from your bottle?' he asked.

The eldest son replied: 'No, I'm sorry. If I gave you some of my lunch, there would not be enough for me.' And he walked away from the old man.

Later he began his work cutting down a tree. But he had not worked very long before his axe slipped and he cut himself. He had to run home to have it bandaged. He did not know that it was the little old man who had made this happen because the boy had been too selfish to give him food.

So the second son went to cut wood instead of his brother. His mother gave him a meat pie and a bottle of wine too. And the same little old man met him also, and asked for something to eat and drink, just as he had done before.

But the second son said: 'Be off with you! The more you have, the less there will be for me.'

When the boy started work, the second stroke of his axe hit him on the leg and he had to run home too.

When young Dummling saw that both his brothers could not work, he said: 'Father, may I go and cut the wood?'

His father answered: 'Both your brothers have hurt themselves. You had better stay at home. You don't know how to use an axe.'

But Dummling asked again and again.

'All right,' said his father at last. 'If you are so anxious to cut yourself, as the other two have done.'

Dummling's mother only gave him some dry bread and a bottle of stale beer. Dummling met the same little old man as his brothers had done, and he asked Dummling for a little food and drink.

'I am afraid I only have dry bread and stale beer,' said Dummling. 'But you may share it with me if you like.'

So they both sat down together. As Dummling pulled out his bread, it suddenly turned into a delicious meat pie! And his stale beer turned into sweet wine! They had a lovely meal and when they had finished, the little man said: 'As you have been so kind and let me share everything with you, I send a blessing on you.' He pointed to a tree.

'Do you see that old tree over there?' he asked. 'Cut it down and you will find something at the root.' After saying this the old man went on his way.

Dummling started to cut down the tree. After it had fallen, he

found a hollow under the roots of it, and there in the hollow was a goose with feathers of pure gold!

He picked up the goose and went to an inn where he was going to spend the night. The landlord of the inn had three daughters. They were very curious to see the golden goose and wanted to pull one of its feathers out of its tail.

At last the eldest girl said: 'I really must have one of those golden feathers!' So she waited until Dummling was not looking and she grabbed the goose by the wing.

But a dreadful thing happened! Her hand stuck to the goose. She could not pull it away how ever hard she tried.

Soon the second daughter came into the room. She was hoping to steal a feather too, but the moment she touched her sister, she was stuck too. There they were, both clinging to the goose and quite unable to get away!

When the third daughter came into the room, the other two said: 'Keep away! Don't come near us, don't touch us!'

The third sister could not understand what they meant. She touched them and found herself stuck to them too! And so they all three had to spend the night stuck to the golden goose.

The next morning Dummling was very surprised to find the three girls stuck to each other and to the goose. But there was nothing he could do about it, so he had to go off, carrying the goose with the three girls clinging on behind him. And, wherever he went, they had to follow!

In the middle of a field nearby, the parson met them. When he

saw the three girls following the young man, he said: 'Aren't you girls ashamed of yourselves, following a young man about like that?' He took the youngest girl by the hand to pull her away. But the moment he touched her, he was stuck to her and had to follow the others wherever Dummling led them.

Presently, they met the parson's clerk. When he saw his master, the parson, running after the girls, he was most surprised at such extraordinary behaviour!

He called out: 'Sir, where are you hurrying off to so fast? Have you forgotten there is a christening today?'

He ran up to the parson and touched his gown. In a moment he was stuck to all the others too.

Presently this long string of people met two workmen with pickaxes, and the parson called out: 'We are stuck. Please help us!'

But, of course, the moment the two workmen touched them, they became stuck too! So now Dummling and his goose had seven people running after them.

At last they arrived at a city where a king had an only daughter. The princess was so serious that no one could ever make her laugh. The king did not like having a sad daughter, and had said that anyone who could make her laugh would be allowed to marry her.

When Dummling heard about this, he went to the princess with his goose and seven people trailing behind him. As soon as the princess saw this funny collection of people running after

each other and treading on each others heels, she laughed as she had never laughed before. So Dummling was allowed to marry the princess. There was a wonderful wedding.

Dummling lived happily for always and always with his wife and became heir to the kingdom.



The mouse, the bird, and the sausage

There once was a mouse, a bird and a sausage and the three of them decided to live together. They managed very nicely and lived very happily by sharing the jobs about the house.

It was the bird's job to fly into the forest every day and bring back firewood. The mouse had to fetch water, keep the fire going and lay the table for meals, whilst the sausage did all the cooking.

They were very comfortable and found life very easy, each

doing his own job. But one of them soon became discontented.

One day the bird met one of his friends in the woods and boasted about his comfortable way of living.

His friend, however, said: 'But see how hard you are working whilst the other two have a much easier time staying at home all day.'

The mouse had nothing else to do after making the fire and after fetching the water, except wait in her room until she was called to lay the table. The sausage had nothing else to do except watch the meal cooking, and the pots boiling on the stove.

The bird only had to fly home and drop the bundle of wood on the floor. Then they all sat down to a good meal and went to sleep until the morning.

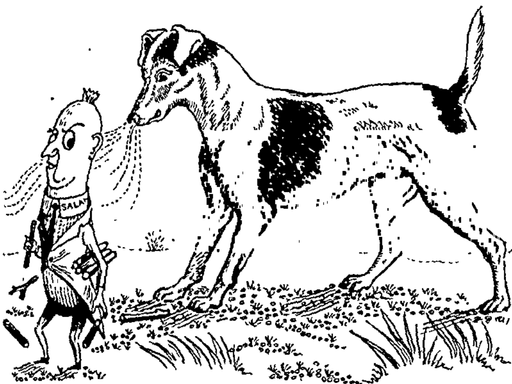
The next day after seeing his friend, the bird would not go into the forest to fetch the wood. He remembered what his friend had told him.

He said: 'My job is much harder than yours. I think we should take turns doing different jobs.'

The mouse and the sausage asked the bird to leave things just as they were because they had all been so happy doing their own jobs. But the bird would not listen to them.

So they tossed up to see which of them should do which job. The sausage's new job was to collect wood, the mouse was to be the new cook and the bird's new job was to fetch the water.

It was a great mistake taking everyone from the job they knew best.



The sausage set out towards the forest, whilst the bird and mouse did their jobs at home. But the sausage was such a long time coming home, that the bird had to fly out to find out what had happened to him.

Not far away the bird found a dog on the road. The dog said: 'I found a sausage on the road so I ate it up.'

The bird cried out angrily: 'You cruel, unkind animal!'

But the dog replied: 'A sausage had no business to be out on the road. It was his own fault for being in the wrong place. How was I to know it was not to eat?'

The poor little bird went home and told the mouse the sad

news. The mouse was most unhappy, but they did their best to carry on.

The little bird went to lay the table and the mouse started to get the dinner ready. But, just as she was dishing it up, the mouse fell into the pot and was drowned.

The bird went into the kitchen and could not see the mouse anywhere. She turned the kitchen upside down, calling and calling, but she could not find the mouse at all.

Meanwhile a blazing log had fallen from the fire on to the spare wood and set it alight. The bird hurried off to get some water to put out the blaze, but his bucket fell into the well, and the bird fell in after it.

So that is the end of the sad tale of the mouse, the bird and the sausage. It would not have been a sad tale if they had only kept on doing the jobs they knew best, and had been more contented.

The seven ravens

There once was a man who had seven sons and a baby daughter. The little girl was very pretty but not very strong. The father wanted to have the little girl christened, so he asked his eldest son to fetch water from the well.

The other six sons were so eager to help fetch the water that they went to the well too. They were all in such a hurry to see which of them could be first to fill his water jug, that they all dropped their jugs down the well.

The boys did not know what to do, for they did not dare to go home without the water and tell their father what had happened.

Meanwhile at home, the father wondered why the boys had not come back. 'They must have started playing in the woods and forgotten all about the water,' said the father.

He waited and waited and still the boys did not return. At last he began to get really cross and said, angrily: 'I wish the naughty boys would all turn into ravens.'

Scarcely had he said the words when he looked up and saw seven black ravens flying overhead! He realised what a dreadful thing he had done, because he did not know how to undo the spell. Because of his angry words, he had lost all his seven sons!

So he gave all his love to his only little daughter who grew up without knowing that she had once had seven brothers.

One day, the little girl overheard someone talking about her.

They were saying: 'Yes, she is beautiful but what a pity her brothers were lost for her sake.'

The little girl wondered what they meant and so she asked her mother and father if it was true that she once had some brothers. And she asked what had happened to them.

Her parents had to tell her everything and the little girl was very sad about it. Every day she thought about her brothers, and wondered how she could bring them back again.

At last she decided to set off and find her brothers, wherever they were, and see if she could turn them back again into men.

She took nothing with her except a little ring which her father and mother had given her, a loaf of bread and some water, and a little stool to rest on when she became tired.

The little girl wandered on and on until she came to the end of the world. She journeyed to the sun, but it was much too hot and fierce, so she ran quickly to the moon. But the moon was too cold, so she hurried off to the stars.

The stars were kind and friendly and each one sat on its own little stool. The morning star got up and gave her a small piece of wood and said: 'With this little piece of wood you can unlock the castle that stands on the glass mountain where your brothers live.'

The little girl took the piece of wood and carefully wrapped it up in a little cloth. She journeyed on until she came to the glass mountain. At the castle door she unwrapped the cloth, but the

piece of wood had gone! She must have dropped it on the way! What was she to do now? She so badly wanted to save her brothers, but now she had no key to the castle. She looked down at her little finger and saw that it was just the size of the piece of wood that the stars had given her.

She pushed her finger in the keyhole and made it red and sore as she turned it in the lock. Bravely she went on using her finger as a key, even after it started to bleed. But it was worthwhile for the door opened!

As she went in, a little dwarf came up to her and asked what she was looking for.

'I am looking for my brothers, the seven ravens,' she replied.

'My masters are not in,' said the dwarf. 'But please come in and wait until they come home.'

The dwarf was busy getting the dinner ready for the ravens. He brought some food on seven little plates, and something to drink in seven little glasses and set them on the table.

The little girl took a little food from each plate, and drank a sip from each glass but she let her ring which she had brought with her, fall into the last glass.

Suddenly she heard a fluttering and a croaking in the air, and the dwarf said: 'Here come my masters.'

The little girl hid quickly behind the door. The ravens immediately started to eat and drink, and each one said, one after the other: 'Who's been eating from my plate? And who's been drinking from my glass?'

'Caw! Caw! I see today
Human lips have been this way.'

When the seventh raven came to the bottom of his glass and found the little ring, he knew it was the one that once belonged to his mother. 'If only our little sister would come!' he sighed. 'Then we should be set free from this spell!'

When the little girl heard these words, she ran forward and immediately all the ravens turned back into boys!

How they all hugged and kissed each other with joy! And away they went home, full of excitment.